

Idaho CareLine Offers Help and Resources

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 **Never Shake a Baby**



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REPORTING



Boise, Idaho -- Between 1200 and 1400 children are the victims of shaken baby syndrome every year in this country. Of them, 300 die.

But in Idaho, there's a toll-free number new parents can dial for help, before letting their frustrations get that physical. It's called the Idaho CareLine.

Kristen Bruce and her 22-month-old daughter, Allie, are enjoying a beautiful day at Camel's Back Park. The first-time mother has loved every minute of parenthood, but admits some days are better than others.

"I remember there were a lot of times when it was exhausting and frustrating," said Bruce.

But no matter how difficult things get, Bruce like many parents says she'd never hit or shake her little girl.

"Step away from the child and outside the room, take a breath for yourself, and regroup and go back and see if you can take care of things," she said.

Advice health experts give every new parent who may feel a bit overwhelmed with a crying child.

"Every parent does need a break. If you have a family friend or relative that can come over for awhile, stay with you, stay with the baby, let you get out, that's one of the best things you can do," said Tom Shanahan with the Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare.

But for parents who may not have family and friends around, Idaho has a three-digit number they can call for help. Using a landline or cell phone, just dial 211. That's where they'll get connected with local community resources -- everything from parenting to childcare, medical assistance and counseling.

Knowing that support is just a phone call away eases the mind of many first-time parents.

"It would be nice to know that if I ever needed help in any way that I could certainly get some help where I needed it," said Bruce.

But for her, there's one piece of advice she says works everytime. Advice she wants to pass along to other frustrated moms and dads.

"Try as much as possible to be patient. You'll get through it, it's not something that will last forever," she said.

Shaking a baby can cause brain damage and even death. If you notice any sudden change in your child's behavior, blood in his eyes or seizures and convulsions, you're urged to call your doctor immediately or go to the emergency room.

For more information on the Idaho CareLine, we've posted a link under NewsLinks.